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TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 1715
INFO RUEHNH/AMCONSUL NAHA 8465
RUEHOK/AMCONSUL OSAKA KOBE 9741
RUEHKS/AMCONSUL SAPPORO 6675
RUEHFK/AMCONSUL FUKUOKA 6072
RHMFISS/5AF YOKOTA AB JA
RHMFISS/18WG CP KADENA AB JA
RUHBABA/CG III MEF CAMP COURTNEY JA
RUHBANB/CG MCB CAMP BUTLER JA
RUHBABA/CG THIRD MARDIV CAMP COURTNEY JA
RUEKJCS/CJCS WASHINGTON DC
RHMFISS/CMC WASHINGTON DC
RUENAAA/CNO WASHINGTON DC
RUHBANB/COMMARCORBASESJAPAN CAMP BUTLER JA
RUHEHMS/COMMARCORBASESPAC CAMP H M SMITH HI
RUHPSAA/COMMARFORPAC
RUYNAA/COMNAVFORJAPAN YOKOSUKA JA
RHHMBA/COMPACFLT PEARL HARBOR HI
RHOVVKG/COMSEVENTHFLT
RUEADWD/CSA WASHINGTON DC
RUEAHQA/CSAF WASHINGTON DC
RUEKJCS/JOINT STAFF WASHINGTON DC
RUEAHQA/OSAF WASHINGTON DC
RHHMUNA/HQ USPACOM HONOLULU HI
RUEKJCS/SECDEF WASHDC
RUENAAA/SECNAV WASHINGTON DC
RHMFISS/USFJ
RHEHAAA/WHITE HOUSE WASHDC

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 TOKYO 000388

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E.O. 12958: DECL: 02/13/2018

TAGS: [PREL](#) [MARR](#) [PGOV](#) [JA](#)

SUBJECT: AMBASSADOR AND USFJ COMMANDER VISIT OKINAWA
FOLLOWING ALLEGED RAPE INCIDENT

Classified By: Ambassador J. Thomas Schieffer; Reasons: 1.4 (b/d)

11. (C) Summary: During a February 13 visit to Okinawa, the Ambassador told Okinawa Governor Nakaima that he and USFJ Commander Lt. Gen. Wright had come personally to show the people of Okinawa how seriously the United States takes the Feb. 10 alleged sexual assault/rape incident. He assured Nakaima that we will cooperate fully with the authorities to ensure that justice is done. The Ambassador also stated that every American in Japan is thinking of the victim and is hoping she will soon recover from this traumatic experience. The Governor said that he appreciated the sincerity shown by the Ambassador and Lt. Gen. Wright, and by III MEF Commander Lt. Gen. Zilmer and Consul General Maher the previous evening, in coming to see him so quickly to express remorse over this incident. The Governor told the Ambassador there have been similar incidents in the past, requested visible measures to prevent any further incidents, and noted that such crimes threaten to undermine the U.S. relationship with Okinawa. End Comment.

Ambassador Conveys Concern for Victim

12. (SBU) The Ambassador, USFJ Commander Lt. Gen. Wright, III MEF Commander Lt. Gen. Zilmer, and Consul General Maher called on Governor Nakaima on February 13 to discuss the alleged February 10 rape by a Marine Staff Sergeant of an Okinawan school girl. In front of sixty media personnel, the Ambassador told the Governor that he and Lt. Gen. Wright wanted to come to Okinawa personally to let the people of the

island know how seriously the United States takes the situation. The Ambassador said it is truly regrettable that an incident like this could have occurred, and that his heart goes out to the young girl, her family, and all those affected. He then assured the Governor that we will do all we can to cooperate with the authorities to ensure that justice is done in this matter.

13. (SBU) The Ambassador added that III MEF Commander Lt. Gen. Zilmer and all the members of his command feel just as badly about this situation, and had asked the Ambassador to express their regret and assurances they are prepared to take whatever steps are necessary to prevent such incidents from happening again. The Ambassador told the Governor that every American in Japan wants the girl and her family to know that we are thinking of her and hoping she will soon recover from this traumatic experience. The Ambassador handed a private letter to the victim's family, and asked that the Governor pass it to the family.

Governor Praises Quick Response

14. (SBU) The Governor said that he appreciates the sincerity shown by the Ambassador and Lt. Gen. Wright, and by Lt. Gen. Zilmer and Consul General Maher the previous evening, in coming to see him so quickly to express remorse over this incident. The Governor told the Ambassador there have been similar incidents in the past, requested visible measures to prevent any further incidents, and noted that such crimes threaten to undermine the U.S. relationship with Okinawa.

TOKYO 00000388 002 OF 002

15. (SBU) Following the meeting with the Governor the Ambassador took questions from the press, and was asked if this incident would affect the base realignment plan in Okinawa. The Ambassador responded that we hope it would not, but that at this point the focus should be on the victim and her family, and ensuring that justice is done. He stressed that we are cooperating fully in the investigation in this regard.

Positive and Widespread Media Coverage

16. (C) The visit received extensive press coverage, with the two local newspapers' evening headlines stating "Ambassador expresses regret", "promises thorough measures to prevent reoccurrence", and "passes letter to victim's family." Contacts in the media and local political circles told ConGen Naha that the quick response from the U.S. side was clearly noted in Okinawa, and taken as a sign that the U.S. understands the importance of this issue and is sincere in its response. Contacts both in Naha and Tokyo noted the contrast to the response to the 1995 rape case which galvanized opposition to the bases.

Comment

17. (C) Initial response to the Ambassador's visit as well as the actions of senior military and Consulate officials appears to be good. Nevertheless, base opposition and reformist political groups in Okinawa as well as political opponents of the GOJ are still trying to use the incident for their own political purposes -- by calling for SOFA revision, closure of bases, or new restrictions on off-base activities.

But even some of the anti-base newspaper editors in Okinawa report that the quick response from the U.S. is undercutting those opponents.

SCHIEFFER